

acres); Malheur River (3,066 acres); Glacier Mountain (14,578 acres); Myrtle-Silvies (9,855 acres); and Greenhorn Mountain (13,322 acres). Greenhorn Mountain is also known as Vinegar Hill-Indian Rock Scenic Area, Management Area 7, (See Appendix J, Allocation of RARE II Acres by management area).

The acres mentioned above (75,034) are to be managed in an unroaded condition, but for multiple use. Although some may argue that this is creating "de facto wilderness", we in fact allow many activities which are not allowed in wilderness areas. The many uses allowed in these unroaded areas that cannot occur in wilderness include structural habitat improvements, recreation facility improvements such as sanitary facilities and primitive camp sites, and under certain conditions, special uses such as electronic sites. In addition, the use of mechanical equipment will be allowed in the maintenance and administration of lands in the unroaded allocations.

Approximately 14,274 acres in, or adjacent to, two other roadless areas will be managed with a "wildlife emphasis - with scheduled timber harvest" prescription. These include 5,229 acres in the Dry Cabin Wildlife Emphasis Area (Management Area 20A), and 9,045 acres in the Utley Butte Wildlife Emphasis Area (Management Area 20B).

Also, 37,476 acres in, or portions of, six roadless areas will be managed with a "wildlife emphasis - no scheduled timber harvest" prescription (Management Area 21). These areas include Jumpoff Joe (4,006 acres); Baldy Mountain (5,380 acres); Dixie Butte (6,895 acres), and Nipple Butte (5,795 acres); McClellan Mountain (4,800 acres) and Dry Cabin (10,600 acres). In these areas timber harvest will be allowed only if it is needed to meet wildlife objectives.

While roads in the wildlife emphasis areas, with and without scheduled timber harvest (Management Areas 20A, 20B, and 21), will be allowed, additional road construction will be minimized. In these areas all roads will be obliterated or closed to vehicle traffic once project activities are completed.

Before timber harvesting and road building takes place in any former RARE II roadless area, an area transportation analysis will be completed for it and the surrounding area.

Approximately 2,646 acres of the Dixie roadless area will be allocated to the General Forest Management Area. However, these acres will be managed to emphasize winter recreation potential.

Those areas not selected for unroaded management were assigned to a variety of management emphases. Developmental activities will occur in all these areas to varying degrees. In some areas the activities will occur over much of the land area, significantly reducing its roadless character. In other areas, varying amounts of undeveloped land area will remain.

It is my decision not to recommend Pine Creek for wilderness classification at this time. The Pine Creek area will be managed primarily to maintain big-game winter range habitat. The remainder of the area will be managed primarily to protect bald eagle winter roosts and maintain old growth.

ISSUE AREA : Economic Stability

- How will management of Forest resources affect local communities?

The Malheur National Forest comprises about 39% of Grant County's acreage and 5% of Harney County's acreage, as well as small acreages in Baker and Malheur Counties. Because of the substantial acreages, distinct economic ties, and the people's use patterns, the Forest's primary zone of influence has been determined to be Grant and northern Harney counties. Industries and communities in adjacent counties are also affected by resource management policies on the Forest.

Malheur National Forest policies have a direct impact on local, dependent industries which, in turn, affect business income, wages, employment, and revenues to the counties. The principal industries in the Forest's zone of influence are wood manufacturing, agriculture (i.e., ranching), and retail trade. These three industries account for about half of all employment in the area. Another large part of the economy is government employment, including state agencies and federal agencies (more than just the Forest Service), and much of that is also based on timber and livestock management.

Forest management activities and the resulting outputs influence job opportunities, incomes, and the way of life of the approximately 15,000 residents in local communities. Changes in Forest outputs and activities will affect the social and economic life of the local population.

Economic and community stability are acknowledged to be very important, and social stability is strongest when the local industries are healthy. Some people equate stability with a sustained supply of Malheur National Forest timber adequate to meet the demands of local industry. Others believe that the counties have been too dependent on primary timber manufacturing, and that a more diversified economy should be cultivated, including growth in tourism and development of secondary wood products manufacturing.

My decision strives to maintain economic and community stability. Under the selected alternative a sufficient mix of resource uses will be provided to meet foreseeable demand for most resource uses. Range outputs will decline slightly from recent use, however, the ranching industry will be provided with sufficient access to Forest forage to maintain most herd levels. This will assist in maintaining an industry which contributes to the social stability of the area. The selected alternative also produces an annual allowable sale quantity (ASQ) of 200 million board feet (MMBF). As the timber industry health is directly tied to the economy in eastern Oregon, the following discussion portrays the relationship of timber supply to local economic stability.

From 1980-1989, the average annual timber sold on the Malheur NF was 219 MMBF (similar to ASQ). The selected alternative will make available an amount that is slightly (9%) below this level. The average annual harvest over the same ten years was 174 MMBF. This period has included the worst recession since establishment of the local timber industry (65 MMBF of net sawtimber harvested in 1982) and the highest recorded harvest (281 MMBF harvested in 1986) in Malheur National Forest history.

However, from 1970 through 1989, the average annual timber sale level (net volume, similar to ASQ) was about 198 MMBF. Average annual harvest for this time was 168 MMBF. This 20 year period of time gives a clearer picture of the long term timber supply history, as the extremes that have occurred within the last 8 years are moderated.

With only a slight decrease in the timber supply level over recent years (1980-89), and essentially the same as the long term average, a stable amount of raw material is projected to be available for timber industries within and adjacent to the Forest's zone of influence. This is expected to be a stable supply of timber in order to maintain local industries currently in place. This is virtually the same amount of timber that has been supplied annually over the last 20 years from the Malheur National Forest, and so should help to remain a cornerstone of a stable and predictable local economy.

It is important to note that although the timber supply is projected to be approximately the same as the long term average, the species mix and size class of products will change. Generally speaking, the amount of ponderosa pine will decrease and the diameter (size) of logs of all species offered will be reduced as we move from harvesting of large diameter trees to managing secondary growth. This is discussed in greater detail in the following issue "timber management".

Competition is expected to intensify for the high quality, large diameter material (primarily ponderosa pine) available from the Forest during the life of this plan. Not only will competition intensify for high

quality material, competition is also increasing from outside the historical zone of influence for all timber volume offered

Local counties are attempting to develop a more diverse economic base, including an emphasis on tourism. This will depend to considerable extent on encouraging visitors to enjoy the natural scenic and recreational attractions of the area as well as its historical features. The National Forest will figure prominently in any such plans. These efforts to create a more diverse economic base can only help the overall economy in the long run.

It is my decision to manage noncommodity resources at a level which maintains the rural, forested setting important to local lifestyles, as well as providing a strong foundation for diversifying the economic base of the affected communities. Approximately 40% of the Forest will be managed under guidelines which do not include scheduled timber harvest. Much of this area will provide a recreation setting relatively free of human intrusions. Many other areas will be managed to meet other concerns important to Forest visitors, such as scenic travel corridors and big-game habitat. We will work with partners to develop and enhance recreational use of the Malheur National Forest and promote tourism in the area.

Frequently people have commented that payments to counties must not be reduced. Returns to counties for schools and roads depend on the price of timber as much as on the amount sold because payments are based on receipts rather than harvest volume. Ponderosa pine is the most valuable species on the Malheur National Forest, thus this species greatly influences payments to counties. The amount of ponderosa pine offered for sale must be reduced. It simply is no longer available in the amounts necessary to sustain annual harvest at past rates. It is my decision to emphasize future availability of ponderosa pine by reverting 75,000 acres of currently mixed conifer stands back to ponderosa pine type over the next 50 years. In addition the selected alternative schedules commercial thins in many ponderosa pine stands. This reduces the number of trees, allowing the remaining stand more room to grow, thus gaining some harvest now and more rapid growth of the remaining trees. Both these efforts will help support a strong economic base for the future.

In Alternative I 29,090 acres were not selected for timber harvest because they were not economically efficient, or it will cost more to harvest than can be recovered in the short-term. Some of these acres are decadent, low value, mixed conifer species which have the potential of being productive in the next stand rotation. It is my decision to bring these acres back into the suitable land base but not schedule ASQ off them at this time. These acres will be located and treated based on site-specific analysis, when market conditions are favorable and the budget allows. If these acres can be treated and brought back into a productive condition, the ASQ will be added back into scheduled harvest after initial treatment. Estimates are that this could be as much as 4 MMBF per year.

The reason I have chosen to put these acres back into the suitable base is because they are good timber producing sites although they do not have productive stands on them now. The reason I did **not** schedule harvest off them at this time is because although they are productive lands, they do not have the ability to contribute to ASQ without treatment. The 29,090 acres that were not selected for timber harvest are not distinguishable from those which have been selected except through site-specific analysis. Therefore, site-specific analysis will identify if a given acre is indeed economically inefficient and has the potential to be productive in the next stand rotation. After treatment, the ASQ will be added back into the scheduled harvest.

In my judgement, the Forest Plan provides a balance between commodity outputs and amenity resources that will contribute to economic stability of dependent communities, while maintaining the natural character and recreational settings desired by many of our publics. Decisions contained in the Forest Plan will affect communities. The Forest Service will work with communities to address these effects within the framework of the Pacific Northwest Strategy.